



Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund

SB 1190: Forced Sterilization Compensation Act Senator Nancy Skinner (D-Berkeley)

THIS BILL

SB 1190 establishes the Eugenics Sterilization Compensation Program to compensate survivors of coerced sterilization under California's eugenic law on the books from 1909 to 1979.

ISSUE

Motivated by eugenics, the belief that some people are more fit to reproduce than others, California state legislators passed a law in 1909 authorizing involuntary sterilization. California then began to administer the most active sterilization program in the nation, sterilizing more than 20,000 people.

All people affected lived in state institutions and were classified as having disabilities or deemed "unfit for reproduction." Administrators of the law at the time had broad discretion in practice to decide who was "unfit." Research indicates that the majority of sterilizations were done on women and girls and disproportionately impacted Latinas, who were 59% more likely to be sterilized than non-Latinas. The state's program lasted until 1979.

Eugenic sterilization programs are now recognized as a major human rights abuse. In 2003, Governor Gray Davis and the California State Senate separately apologized for California's eugenic sterilization program. Their apologies, however, were not accompanied by any redress. Although monetary compensation cannot adequately address the harm suffered by sterilization survivors, it is a material acknowledgement of this horrific past.

SOLUTION

SB 1190:

- Establishes a program to compensate verified survivors who were sterilized in a California State institution. In 2019 when the bill would go into effect, researchers estimate there will be 630 survivors, 25% of whom are anticipated to come forward.
- Requires placement of plaques at designated sites that acknowledge the forced sterilization of thousands of Californians, and a traveling historical exhibit and other educational opportunities about eugenics law in California.

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California Latinas for Reproductive Justice
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund

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